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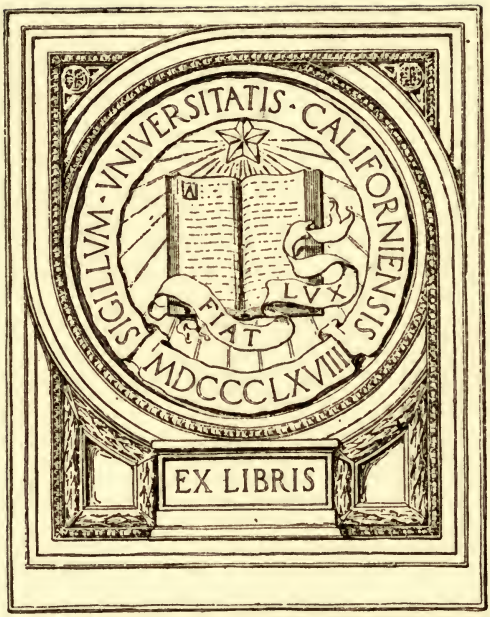
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THE CYCLE'S RIM

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BY

OLIVE TILFORD DARGAN

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1916

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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TO

ONE DROWNED AT SEA

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I

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I

DEEP lies thy body, jewel of the sea,
Locked down with wave on wave. Pearl-drift among
The coral towers, and yet not thee, not thee!
So lightly didst thou mount, blue rung o'er rung,
The lustred ladder rippling from that land
Of strangely boughed and wooing wildernesses.
Province of dream unwaning, dream yet banned
From sleepers in the sun; but thou, as presses
The lark that feels his song, sped to thy sky.
O unrepressed! If thou wouldst choose be gone,
What sea-charm then could stay thee, bid thee lie
Too deep for cock-crow earth or heaven's dawn?
Yet must I chant these broken, mortal staves,
And lay my leaf of laurel on the waves.

II

WHEN God has dropped his garlands to the earth,
And birds in twittering showers cry "Spring, O Spring!"
What heart among us then knows not rebirth,
Nor would, if harp were his, go forth and sing?
And when again He takes his garlands in,
Baring the earth His wish had warmed with rose,
Till eyes that meet no bloom seem made in vain,
How bows the heart and like a mourner goes!
So would I sing and mourn. Sing how Life wore
Thee for her Spring, her rose, her radiance spread;
And mourn—nay!—not for me is moaning sore,
Who see thee now God's garland never dead.
But I will sing, and if men smile and say
"A Laura hymns her Petrarch," so they may.

III

Alas! this Laura's lips are not blest banks
Where flows the marvel measure of the stream
Whose drops are words. Dumb peasant, she gives thanks
For any rough-spun web to dress her dream
And make it visible to eyes that doubt;
And doubting see but air where seraph shape
Makes radiant the roads that wind about
Earth's twilight fringes that too heavy drape
The striving lance of sight. But she, so poor
In shining words that those who hear must scoff,
Bears in her eyes such riches, such dear lure
Of vision, that ere dies the mocker's laugh,
She forward springs to take thee by the hand,
Nor stays her joy till doubters understand.

IV

THEN back through lifting arches of the years
On arrow feet we run. The spent, prone days
Rise mantling where they dusked. Sod-sunken tears,
That dropped as cypress brew upon these ways,
Shine up like eyes joy-soft. The clammy shade
Of forest doubts clings now like faith that fills
Cathedral air when holy touch is laid
On saintly kneelers. Love, O love, what thrills
Tremble from heart to heaven! Is it ours,
This world where leaves and light and faces all
Learn manners of the dove? This earth that flowers,
Shallop of rose whose petals never fall?
Where we infolded sail, the stars our strand,—
Our irised islands where our dreams may land.

V

Now lock my eyes their lids and lose the key
To every world but that vast world we found
When heaven was a flowering orchard tree,
All earth a tender ring of April ground;
For we have come unto our day of days,
When our two souls and God made trothal feast;
Each apple spray an angel witness was,
Each still grass blade a little waiting priest;
Your words throbbed free, each one a prisoned bird
Finding at last the sky, till all the air
Beat like a wingèd sea, and I who heard
Sat mute as God who fell in wonder there.
He made the sun, but Love had made the word
That new suns bore when He no finger stirred.

VI

Joy is my earth where I am planted now!
My roots drink of her veins and thirst no more.
Upward she builds me, stem and gownèd bough,
And buds are sweet where never bloom I bore.
I hear the waters rise in hidden springs
That are to feed me from cool treasuries
In far, untrampled lands. I hear the wings
That from dim mountains and sky-gated seas
Shall nestle like caught wonders whispering
My tremorous green more tremorous prophecies;
Till Dream, the venturer, pause at last to sing
And leave me nest that never silent is.
Gold bounty from the sun I shall not need;
My radiance then the needy sun shall feed.

II

VII

THERE'S topaz on the winds that touch my hair,
There's sapphire on the water where my hands
Dive under ripples, flirting with your prayer
"Drown not my doves!" Flame, flame, a white flame bands
The sky, but cool as purity, or snood
That binds a maid's dew-dreams. O Love, that gave
The bird its wing, brown earth the quivering wood,
The fish its fin, a free sky to the slave,
And man his God, give me the song that breaks
Like buds from heart-sod,—darts with pollen flying
To lips of lyric bloom, and silvery wakes
The trembling morrows, sweeter for that crying.
One deathless song,—of all thy gifts the crown,—
Flute-call of lovers till Time's sun go down.

VIII

FORGIVE, bright Power, and my suit forget!
My lute I lift, but love that shone so near,
A fairy lantern in a lily set,
Now rides the sky, moon-whirling Jupiter!
As one who stands beside a breaking sea
And fatuous strives with fainting voice to reach
Across the waves, where mild shores hidden be,
To charm the ear of dancers on the beach,
Would I sing now if now I sought to rhyme
Love's ocean-flexures with immortal word
For lovers on the shores yet waiting Time;
But, keyed so frail, I, like that little bird
Whose song is gaily pitched above man's ear,
Shall not less happy sing though none may hear.

IX

My love! Shy as the wonder in a young deer's eye,
Bold as a seer with every riddle read;
Swift as the dagger fire of storm's dusk sky,
Loitering as light where June's late lilies bed.
Now is thy soul a glacier-girdled lake
That never mirrored murk of human gaze,
And now, a rebel rillet, 'twould partake
Of dusty joys by trundled, peasant ways.
Thou art an ardor that would burn the sea;
Thou art the tremor of a far, white sail;
Thou art a linnet's dream; the poetry
That sleeps in Asia; wakes to walk in mail.
A thousand loves should wed these thousand men.
"Thou art my thousand women," saidst thou then.

X

WHY do I love thee? Thee, my other wing?
Sweet of the wild? My tree of cinnamon?
Not for thine eyes where twilights wandering
Lead me beyond the world past any sun
Whose arrows query after. Not for pearls
Within thy voice, that bring with them the sea
They could not leave; nor thy low laugh that curls
Soft captor rings round fireside mystery;
Nor faun in thee that seeks a forest goal
Hid in my heart; nor hermit's shade and tent
Thou makest of thine arms for my bare soul
When, stripped of vision, there I creep forspent.
Nay, I know not. Thus is my love defended
'Gainst ambushed Time. Know, and love's day is ended.

XI

THE cloud-dropped shadow over meadows moving,
Whose double in the sky so whitely rides,
Takes shape and being, slow or swiftly roving,
But as its high begetter shapes and guides.
So hearts are meadows for love's ever-passing;
Unmortal shadow, mould and motion given
By regent substance high above possessing,
Unalterable save by a change in heaven.
And I am not as bold astronomers
Who name all planets in that heaven moving,
Which loosens, binds, which speeds and which deters;
Love knows them not who know the why of loving.
Their hearts are free; if ever by love tied,
Their maps will be forgot or stout denied.

XII

Ah well, we know the universe we know
A sandgrain is unto the one that has
No boundary in thought, and all the show
That science makes is as a juggler's pass
Outside the circus door of wonders. Spheres
Fly animate with aim, while man doth make
His genial plaudits that awake no ears
Beyond his own; at his breath's end they break.
Truth is the planet's eye, but yet is faith
Her mighty telescope, uncovering all
The formless outworlds, till the Whisperer saith
"There lie my bower-lands; let go this ball."
Yet in one heart we wall His globed demesne,
Nor need of windows when we've all within.

III

XIII

I've built for Love a cabin on the cliffs,
And in the door he sits with moody wings
At rest from flight. Here all his tiffs
Are with the winds and stars and soaring things,
While in and out an eager slave I go,
Now at the hearth, now making white the floor,
Now to the table pass with curds of snow,
My furtive eyes upon the sunny door.
Wilt stay, my cloudling? Here thou still canst breathe
Thy heavenly meadows. Sleeping on my breast,
Thy playmates more than mortal still may wreathe
Unearthly charms about thee. Dear my guest,
What sweeter place than this where dwells
The mountain violet with thine asphodels?

XIV

THE wind's old wine was in my heart that day
I ran through brake and laurel by the road
Where dumb as pride you passed. Thought I to play
The dryad spy, then must you be a god!
Softly I rustled, lightly leapt and clomb,
And glanced 'tween leaves to see if shadows hung
Still darkly on, or if delight swept home
To eyes and brow,—so teased until your tongue
Rewon its chanting magic, and the air
Was full of jewels dropping, burnished so!
Then from a crystal spring white feet glanced bare,
With red drops trickling. "Stain upon that snow!"
An instant, and your lips those rubies wore;
Then lips of mine could not deny you more.

XV

SORDID my life, they say, and they say true,
If the world's favor be life's only sun.
Here in the firelight where I bake and brew
None save immortals look me smiling on.
Ah, only Heaven's vagrants! If I durst
Take mine own chair an angel must get up,
And, would I drink, ere I may ease my thirst
Celestial lips make bright my cabin cup.
But no silk robes trail hither for my sake,
And for my dear, he is a lord so poor
His dreams are bare of gold. He can but take
A thread from Fate, and, leaving not his door,
If he there will, beneath a threshold vine,
Spin white eternity in one brief line.

XVI

No, we'll not wrangle for a little world!
That world below, so fevered, full of ills.
Think not, my life, my song, that I'd be whirled
Mid those mad powers, tho' in their grinding mills
I might, a prophet passing, drop the flame
That starts millennium, if millennium bread
Builds all to one stale measure. Shall we maim
The rising god? Lop off the giant's head
And stilt Tom Thumb? Forbid the living ground
Its wild variety, till smooth as lies
A magnate's lawn, at last the earth is round?
That heavenward trundling with our polished prize,
God's laughter we may hear, low, lyrical,
So pleasèd is He with his pretty ball.

XVII

YET that were better than this giant sieve
Wherein mankind is rustled to and fro,
Saving coarse chaff, while wasting winds receive
The fine and precious worth so shaken through.
Homeless, we can not see above a roof;
Naked, 'twere Heaven to be gowned and shod;
'Twixt art and vision ever is the loaf;
Fed, clad, and housed, still do we dwarf our god,
Concerned to keep nor be as others bare.
Oh, break the monstrous mesh with wisdom's flail
That tosses chaff and living grain doth spare,
Till, where loss ached, life surge imperial,
And men as mountains be, lifting to skies
Unshrouded, shining inequalities!

XVIII

But thou dost draw me deeper in the nook
Time makes for lovers in an hourless grove,
Folding the world away, a weary book,
To read me still the unwearying book of love.
Ay, dear my all, why should we haste and waste,
And restless toss on action's turbid bed,
Fearing too early sleep, when chokes at last
With opiate dust all Being's fountain-head?
Utopias died for, must they too not die?
And even the Tree of Life with shrunken boughs
Shake with death-shudder earth and hell and sky,
Meeting the winter that no spring shall rouse?
But hold me close, for stirs my heart in sleep
To walk with those who late do work and weep.

IV

XIX

In light transfigured who can more than shine?
Where banquets God, can more than silent feast?
The unwrit wonder passes: shall we pine,
With fumbling pen behind an echo ceased?
When frail words break 'tis music to be dumb;
For lesser cadence is the singing line;
Not for Creation's rhythms that cageless hum
When nerves are boughs of fire round veins that twine
Like smothered winds. Content us, love, to let
Torn Heaven through us fare, though but to break
And leave us with no mark that men may set
On reason's hills. Content, for Life must make
The wild birth hers. What is her poetry
But madness masked in Beauty's charity?

XX

Love broken lies, a tassel of the wind
Caught on my breast. Now must he hear my song.
My timid reed can shyest music find
That bold pipes miss. Though dawn to dawn be long,
Brief runs the dark and light by charmed ears flowing;
Each Hour prints her light foot, a little dell,—
Too small for step of Care, like Titan growing,—
Where greenly lapped we hide from noisy swell
Of morn's flamingoes rippling up the gray,
From noon's gold trump that makes our shut lids tremble,
From eve's horizon dust and sunset bray,
From synod winkings when cold stars assemble.
With face of flowers shall the minutes go,
While soft my notes, like laden bees, drift low.

XXI

WHAT is this thirst no cup we drain can slake?
What royal touch may heal our troubling blood
Till salve and crutch are spurned, and in our wake
The air is blest? O Time, when shall unhood
The highlands of our yearning? Echoless
Long since the pagan fields, once travel-kissed
And musical with feet; and long we press
These pastures chill that climb from mist to mist
On stairways of dead gods. What if the end
Is but to end not? Whispering fir and pine
Shall fool us still, and on the peak no Friend
Step from cloud bastions with the wings and wine?
But, dear my dear, what way can be too long
If in our shadows shelter Love and Song?

XXII

I AM a tree that puts out little boughs
Dreaming of harvest and a mellow moon;
But Love, who owns me by my many vows,
Comes nibbling, nibbling, late and oft and soon.
I like his lips upon my tender leaves;
'Tis joy to make him feasts of honey-buds;
But doubts come trembling, and a fear me grieves,—
I may stand barren in the laden woods.
And Love himself some day may seek my shade
To find but bony branches waiting him.
What shelter could I give him weary laid?
What succoring fruit from any staring limb?
Ah, Love, do not my harvest dream devour,
Lest thou know famine in my barren hour.

XXIII

O God, what tumult buried is, unguessed
As strife that rends a smiling-windowed house,
Within that hidden room, a woman's breast,
When agony on guard must make fair bows
To casual fortune! So communing I
Stood 'neath the pines that warmed a little hill;
Smiled on the hours, and gave the empty sky
A soul of hope, for one would come and fill
The tender region with a sweeter breath,
Though all the air was Spring's; or he would put
On warrior beauty, victor be whose faith
No rout e'er knew; or anything but—*but!*
Then sank I, sudden stone, no stir or start,
As loomed the heart of shadows o'er my heart.

XXIV

But came that later eve beneath that sky!
Where dropped the scented circlet of the pines
Around me mute, the moon's slow hours went by.
No more my lips would touch the wine of wines;
Renouncement, palest star o'er mortals set,
Crept to me cold as light upon a grave;
Sole lamp for me, no other would be lit
By God or Life or Time, however brave
Might rise the last despair. Then out of night
Your laughter covered me like ointment spilled;
Around me pealed your words, a torrent light,
And my sick soul rose up, virgin and healed,
On radiance walking. O, as Heaven had broke,
And dropped her little stars, you golden spoke!

V

XXV

BESIDE an oak, sprung in deformity,
Curved backward to the ground in mighty pain,
Today we paused, nor dared I look on thee
Until I saw how straight it leapt again,
Bold to the skies, leaf-fingers on the blue,
As proud alive as any thought of God,
Sipping the sun as heaven's favored do,
Sending the light's tide whispers to the sod.
Then vowed my eyes to thine no conduits dark
Feeding thy veins from tragic under-earth
Should hold thee bowed; the regions of the lark
For thee should open, thee by second birth
Made heir and comrade of the sky that bides
No pulse too weak for joy's eternal tides.

XXVI

THE pasture is a forest where we lie;
The slender grasses rise, a wilderness
With mammoth bars that cage the captive sky,
As jungle-deep thy cheek to mine I press.
One clover blossom is a blackened sun
That threatens now earth's summer-sweetened face,
One humble-bee rocks high his nettle throne
Vast as he were of Saturn's fallen race.
So may it be that the soul's sunken eye,
By earth disvantaged, fooled by mountain tears,
Makes height and depth too weary deep and high,
And blinding minutes swell to burdened years.
For God's great spaces not a breath have we;
The wave we climb is larger than the sea.

XXVII

AGAINST a tree deep rooted past the fear
Of any winds, yet by the mad wind swayed,
I lean my body weary with the sheer
Climb from the valley. Far the huge hills fade,
Thin ghosts of storm. Thrilled, fearless as the tree,
I move with its brave rhythm, as one might swing
In wildly sweet, adventuring ecstasy
O'er an abyss on an archangel's wing.
Could I thus stay thee, hold thee, O my dear,
With mighty roots of mine when tempests beat,
Give thee thy storms, the sky a girdle wear,
Yet ever safe, how godly great and sweet
Would my heart grow! Faint heart that offers thee
A straw, a reed, a trembling willow tree!

XXVIII

"THINK not I love thee less because the less
Each day I love the earth that still is fair,
And that my lips grow paler as they press
Thy brow, thine eyes, thy tossèd dusk of hair.
Far shores sweet voices have, and I have heard
Sounds from a shore so far no dream divining
May coast its wonder, and my veins are stirred
With palms that tremble there, to no eye shining.
These violets that sweet my fingers make
For having plucked them, fairer doubles have
That I with fairer hands stoop down and take
Unto my heart. Thou'lt find them on my grave.
Oh, grieve not! Herbs that heal us first must die;
And may I dead heal thee immortally!"

XXIX

So sang I when the sunset drew my breath
Into itself upon the far world's edge,
And touched me with the dream that men call death.
So sang I softly by your window ledge,
While you within dropped tears upon a book
You did not read; then coming out the door,
Three snowflake kisses from my lips you took,
And, palely as a priest might vow, you swore
By Pity's bosom and by Mercy's tear,
You would not stay me, would not make me late
At holy feast on any sun or sphere;
Nay, would not hold me with one kiss's weight,
But would forthspeed when you my cold hand lost
To clasp it first where God himself stands host.

VI

XXX

THE tower-star that lit the peaks of soul
And all the encircling sea of tribute dreams,
Has fallen to the waves. Now fathoms roll
Unanswering where ten thousand loyal beams
Leapt to their lofty centre. Slow I pass
Where, choosing me, God late a lantern swung,
My numb, blind feet now fumbling the morass
With not a quivering gleam about them hung.
Some flowers there be that nightly earthward lean,
Yet with their sleeping lids feel for the East
Where dawn shall be, nor weary dark may wean
Their dream from fealty. For me no feast
Of day will break. Be shut my eyes or ope,
There is no East. Nightbound I creep and grope.

XXXI

My Carmel withers 'neath the foot of Spring,
And perished is my house of ivory;
My lake of Edom is a brackish thing;
No more my mountains drop sweet wine to me;
There is no song from any temple coming,
Oh, not a Bethel stone for my sunk head!
Beneath my altar is the banewort blooming,
A bitter salt is on my holy bread.
My aspiration that as eagle flew
Through conquered skies, falls plumb and leaden still;
Ambition's fires are dead of tearful dew;
I stir cold ashes when I urge my will.
Love was the sun I read all meanings by,
And called the habit life; that broke, I die.

XXXII

THE tulips make the month a rajah's walk;
Turbanned the season comes, a nodding Ind;
Young dandelions squat upon their stalk
Like children at a show; the clouds float thinned,
A broken troop beneath the bannered blue;
But no heart beats in any flowering thing;
No little flames lie in cold eyes of dew.
By Heaven's care of man, this is not Spring!
The earth's in coffin, and these imps are called
To paint her cheeks and wreathe her dead, gold hair;
And there's no mourner, no wild drops that scald
A paling face, as through the tearless air
Her chill, rouged body drifts to charnel shore;
For Love died first, and Grief can weep no more.

XXXIII

SHALL I go back, as one whom Fate retrieves,
Where friends are waiting with forbearing smile,
True hands held out, that touch me like dead leaves,
So tender they, and I so numb the while?
May be their souls are staggering as mine own,
But bold they walk, and laugh in Life's warm ear
As I can not, so feeble have I grown,
My small horizon's arc set in a tear.
Fate, loosen me! Is it not time to go
When no thing holds me but thy wilful grip?
When I, a child of smiles who sought to show
No cup too bitter for the chrismed lip,
Shudder from touch of joy, rude, buoyant, crass?
And wounds seem gates to God? Then let me pass.

XXXIV

WHEN failed I, love, in what thou badst be done?
When foundst thou me as now, slow, blundering?
Name me the desert that I fell upon;
Where is the depth we crossed not, wing to wing?
What mount of venture, wild with jut and spur,
Heard thy swift step while I kept lowland home?
At lips of stars who stood interpreter?
Unwrote and writ in sun their sombre doom?
But this dark last, this thing impossible,
This hard command beyond my wizardry,
Lift from my heart. 'Tis not love's miracle.
Upon my struggling pulse thou 'st laid the sea.
No more I eat of magic meat and bread.
Ask me not this—to live when thou art dead.

VII

XXXV

I COME again where, like strung jewels, run
The highland waters ; where for me the hills
Throw back their veils like virgins that have won
Celestial gates. The moss-lapped season spills
Green treasure over footprints that I seek,
But tears will find them 'neath the deepest cover,
And I may lay me down and warm my cheek
With happy sod where passed, as sun, my lover.
Ah, not alone these fragrant heights he pressed,
These honey-suckle ways up granite steeps
Where earth in tender emerald has drest
Her bones that pillar heaven. Time, that now sleeps
Like poppied fire, once played the etcher's part
On all these paths, his pen upon my heart.

XXXVI

TODAY I went among the mountain folk
To hear the gentle talk most dear to me.
I saw slow tears, and tenderness that woke
From sternest bed to light a lamp for thee.
And "Is it true?" hope asked and asked again,
And "It is true," was all that I could say,
And pride rose over love to hide gray pain
As eyes tears might ungrace were turned away.
So much they loved thee I was half decoyed
By human warmth to feel thee near, but when
I put my hand out all the earth was void,
And vanished even these near-weeping men.
Thus each new time I find that thou art gone,
Anew do I survive the world, alone.

XXXVII

Eyes, voice and smile, thou didst as Heaven spend!
Hid in a nook of Autumn once we came
To a brown forest road. Lone in a bend
A cottage rose, where stately sat a dame
Gazing from age's ruin. With soft tread
Her gloom you parted; magically glowed
Her lost days from your eyes; round her you spread
The vanished ring where Knight and Beauty rode,
Your gallant tongue her memory's chariot,
Till, rising tall, she leaned her cheek, bright then,
Proud with youth's flush, and said, "Fair son, this spot
A prince once kissed. Now does he pass again."
So lightly drew thou pain from many a life,
While in thine own heart turned and turned the knife.

XXXVIII

Thou art all soul, all airy loveliness,
And thou art gone; but still thy wounds I bind,
Still lift thy head and with cool leaves caress
Thy brow of pain and fire; still strive to find
The healing herb that never grew for thee;
Still wrestle with dark gods for thy white dream,
And challenge Fate with every artery,
While tears on our two faces make one stream.
Nay, drained now of life's ache, thou goest free,
Outside of time, this jail; dost give thy nod
To sunsets that the sun looks west to see;
Knowing at last thyself, myself, and God;
And with a sign so overpayst thy debt
All I have tendered seems vain counterfeit.

XXXIX

THE music-mannered stream that silverly
Wound round our lives in thread unbreakable
Till they made one where life's far sources be,
Flows by me now, an azure lyric still;
Still keeps its mystic tongue, its soul that knows
Unwhispering pools of rest, as love may keep
Unsounded depths yet gossip seem to those
Who listen but with ears. O stream, I sleep
Still hearing thy low cymbals, sounds that break
With shattered secrets of thy leaping way
Whose tale unbaffled would these mountains shake.
Thou that wert dewdrop and wilt be the sea,
Beauty's swift question, wilt thou now not pause,
Silent for him whose heart thine answer was?

XL

How often on some bough arched o'er thy breast,
Its longing curve just foiled of thine embrace,
Where mid the leaves thy murmurs made a nest,
We've sat with down-compellèd gaze to trace
Spirit that passed untraceable and learn
The voice of motion ! With our eyes we heard,
And laid a hush on ears that served no turn
In that deep hour when Deity unsphered
Of all His worlds a parle with love to keep.
Still art thou kind, my stream. Companionly,
When all the wildwood lies in midnight sleep,
Thou bringst the glistening bough, the mystery;
But for thy golden lover no more hears,
Thou too art widowed and leav'st me thy tears.

VIII

XLI

O WHAT a lover must thou be, old Time,
With so much beauty to thy bosom folded!
The queens that reigned o'er monarchies of rhyme,
And by new worship ever newly moulded;
With all the Helens of the lyreless Troys,
Sisters of Laura, Beatrice, Eloise,
Who shone on worshippers denied the voice
To set their name 'mong song's divinities!
And happy thou, my Dear, who now dost share
The secrets of Time's eyes. O, smile thou must,
As Pity smileth, seeing mortals here
Laying another song on Helen's dust.
But of thy joy I dream unjealously,
Knowing in all thy loves thou lovest me.

XLII

Ah me, if in some laurel dale unscarred
By more than trail of nymph or nibbling deer,
A smiling boy might from the leafy guard
Of tender branches bravely on me peer
With eyes whose steadfast bronze yet told of storm,
Stilled as the seas are stilled, deep as the deep,
Eyes that but one could father,—one yet warm
Because that small lad lived to hold and keep
The gift of flame God could not choose let die,—
How I would clasp him while his wonder stared,
And, wife and queen, bend me handmaidenly
If then his mother passed,—she who had dared
Death's house to enter of wild love's accord
And ransom gain I won not for my lord!

XLIII

WHAT fiery dust the stolid earth must hold,
So many passions have in her been laid!
Lights she her Autumn colors at that mould,
The secret of her flame of secrets made?
Does that which ate the heart devour the sky
From hills like rubies heaped, denying even
A grave's dear gloom to pain that sought to lie
Covered with gentle dark's untroubling heaven?
Yet must I love thee, Autumn, love thee more
Than in past days of worship at thy fires;
The kindled heart that did with me adore
Hath fed thee deathless fuel; when thy pyres
Resurgent ache, then must my eyelids burn
Falling 'neath kisses that with thee return.

XLIV

But greenwood clocks are pulsing and the year
Wakes with arbutus ; now the hillsides wear
Their daintiest necklace ; now a voice I hear,
"Love-runs-a-laughing : little flower, bear
That name for us." Soon shall a darling crowd
Make fairy bridges for the days that tread
Song-ringed past orchid queens, past gypsies loud
As circus bells, past hoods of blue and red,
To meet our pearl azalea,—tall and white
Nun of the forest rising holily
By sisters flaming. Oh, but from a height
Where leaves blew back to let the new world by,
Today I heard the bobolink's clear ring
And did not smile. Forgive me, my love's Spring !

XLV

Our locust by the water trembles white,
And o'er the stream her foamy welcome swells;
Then falls your softest laughter, floating light
As tho' a breeze had put on fairy bells;
The laugh you gave when, glad discoverers,
We hunted home a scented wing of air
And found the tree that once among the firs
Of Horeb hill made there a mount of myrrh
And over Tyre a haunting girdle wound
Like odor in a dream. Ghost-delicate,
Again that fragrant wing uplifts the ground,
Whilst primal dust is young as thou in fate.
But as dead worlds fair in thy laughter bloomed,
Not in my sighs, but smiles, live thou untombed.

XLVI

LET not a picture drawn on eyelids shut
Fill all my world ; but may I, open gazing,
No symbol lose that liberal God hath put
Before my chastened eyes, their burden raising
To faith's pure height where burdens wingèd run,
An angel breed, to keep our feet from stones.
O may I as the sea that, seeking one,
Finds on its breast a thousand trembling moons,
Hold thee, my love, in all mine eyes embrace
Of loveliness ! As bright through channelled moss
The forest water winds, be now a grace
Enwoven for me through Nature's every dross ;
And touch of bending, sweet immensity
Make my least day orb mystical with thee !

IX

XLVII

HERE is no beauty I may look upon
And think not of thee; for all ways we went,
And every way did bud or jewel own
That for a moment made thine eyes content
And spill sweet sun to mine. When low winds lift
The milky bellwoods, windowing stealthily
The leaf-ceiled dells where sit in magic thrift
The spinners of the green,—when lone I see
The first white trilium like a poised, lost gull
In th' emerald glen,—shall not my pulses stop,
Waiting for thine? Of fatal peace as full
As still, blue seas seen from a mountain top
Is thought of thee afar. Near, nearer, dear,
Or I must drop me to those fathoms clear.

XLVIII

THOU lovedst thy earth, and wilt not haste from her ;
But wilt go lingering over valley pools,
Like children's eyes, where soft fern-lashes stir ;
Go lingering where the last high peak o'errules
The thickening ranges ; stay to greet, not spurn
The alms-fed moon, that beggar of the skies ;
Still looking back till thou at last must turn
Where it is morning unto Prospero's eyes ;
The while my thoughts, a lured and breathless band,
Struggling to reach thee, grow most strangely fair,—
Fair as the coasts where we may never land,—
But lose thee not, and I'd content me here
To wait my hour, if I might fear no more
To hear, far in the skies, a shutting door.

XLIX

Belovèd, if I keep my spirit fed,
Hear not the rustling world, forget her bays,
Naught caring if I go unlaurellèd
In eyes of fortune, so I fill my days
With thoughts that bud and bloom for heavenly wear,
Sending my soul to seek thy country out,
Spending still hours in wondering of thee there,
And making vision sweet of every doubt,
Wilt thou not come some perfect eve to touch,
As might a god, with visitant fair feet
The meadows where I wait, nor scorn too much
The habits of my earth, but even let
Thy hand be first upon a daisy nigh,
And stand with me to watch the swallows fly?

L

How gently I would move by thee, and strive
To make my step as noiseless as thine own!
And we should find the old dreams still alive,
And not a dead leaf on our altars blown.
Ah, farther! To that ambered, orient sea
We never saw with mortal eyes awake,
Though in our sleep it rippled; glidingly
To all fair places carried like an ache
In our blind breasts; and sometime rest us by
Old temples carved as though the fingered Dawn
Religion were and wrought in ivory
Gifts for the God of Light; so fair the moon
Might there forget to pass, as we, O love!
Below in wonder, as the moon above.

LI

THEN should I seek again a toiler's place
Where Life, grown faint and human, strains to lift
Above her strife a lit and lyric face,
And minutes pass as spears, a wound their gift,—
Thou wouldst not leave me guideless?—thou who needst
To build no more the stoic barricade
'Gainst scathe of word or winds? Nay, thou who feedst
Thy soul at last, unblinded, undismayed,
Upon the truth 'twas madness here to taste,
Wilt teach me even that savorous peril eat,
And with me lingering make the fleshless feast,
Till that dim, upland ground that loves thy feet
Findeth a rival in these cast-off lands.
O now, belovèd, now! Thine eyes, thy hands!

LII

My prayers are thee! But, Dear, what means this thing?
That we do walk together as a wind
Heedless of garden gates where sigh and cling
The little roses that once sought to bind
Our hearts to time; making no pause beside
Blue, curling waters where our thoughts like doves
Drifted to wild-leaf nest; smiling where cried
The tragic marshes with strange shadow loves
That bound us from the sun. The maples burn
Their April wicks of passion; willows yet
Light their slim candles at the dawn's fire-urn;
But here is glow that no Spring ever lit;
Nor hills of vision where we fainting fell
May hold us now, so pale their miracle.

LIII

No longer backward, treading a lost dream,
But where the Future lifts her morning stole;
Past nations that embracing know one name,
Past faces like the flowers of one soul,
God's soul, humanity. Bells never choired
From time's old sweetness with the sweet of these
Making clear song of all that dim aspired
In our old struggles, barren ecstasies,
Tears and despairs. O lordliest Love, that keepst
Eternal pact with Life, naught can discrown
Thee of one bud of flame howe'er thou weepst;
For though these bodies dear are beaten down,
As ocean triumphs by her broken waves,
Thy tidal breath breaks warm above thy graves.

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